

**12/2/2021**

## **Notes from Actors' Think Tank**

### **Thaddeus Daniels**

**Guest e-mail address: [teddyld@aol.com](mailto:teddyld@aol.com)**

10:20

Ernie McClintock was my mentor, and he said when you walk into a space, be who you are don't apologize. Know who you are, be who you are and the rest will speak for itself.

When you know who you are, you make casting's job easier.

12:25

It's good practice to know who you are.

17:37

It's the beauty of NYC, to find your family. In quick order, you usually find your tribe and they become lifelong members of your family that you cry, laugh and go through experiences together.

18:40

Antonio Charity, he works a lot, he and I and a lot of others were part of a group in NYC and he was part of this theatre festival that goes to N. Carolina.

20:17

I had retired from acting, went to see a show and saw my friend Antonio, who invited me to see his show and later he asked if he could stay with me. Then he asked if his cast could stay at my show. So the writer and director of the show Black Angels over Tuskegee, stayed with me. The show kept getting extended and I was eventually asked to join the cast. It was my long standing relationship with Antonio that brought me back to where I was supposed to be: acting.

22:38

Acting is a calling. If you've been touched to act, you have to keep going. You never know how close you are. There is no blueprint. If you've been called to it, trust it. The opportunities will come.

24:11

A lot of time, casting doesn't know who your character name is, so when I address who I was in a scene with on my resume, it allowed casting to know who trusted me and with whom.

25:42

Trust. Life and this business (acting) is about getting people to trust you (i.e. casting directors) Once you get 1 to trust you, everyone else will. The resume tells how many people have come to trust you. When you gain the trust, you just have to perform

27:00

I was working inside a restaurant, waiting on tables: I memorized all of my orders. I was waiting on a table and came back to check on them, and a woman noticed that I didn't write anything down. She asked if I was an actor, then asked me if I was represented. She paid the bill, and before she left, she said "i'm not a talent agent, i'm a casting agent. Send me your

info". I invited her to Black Angles Over Tuskegee, she saw my show, and loved it. Then she told me to reach out to her contact for Commercials and VO. It was the commercial head for Buchwald. And I was signed right away. Several national commercials and voice overs later--it all happened from working at that restaurant.

29:50

Just showing up and my personality had an effect. Always be who you are in whatever space you are in.

30:48

I went in for Law and Order, and casting started liking me. And each role they brought me in for was bigger and bigger. I was brought in for a guest star spot. I looked at my union dues before I walked into my audition, and went into the room with this countenance. And the showrunner and producers were excited to see me, but then this disappointment washed over the showrunner b/c in this moment I came into the room, I brought something from the outside. I made a promise to never do that again. To keep things compartmentalised.

33:18

When I get into the audition space, maximize my opportunity and never let it go.

33:42

I don't take calls or text messages the day of my audition. I don't research the director or producer. B/c these things can work on you.

34:00

I block everything out and just concentrate on the words.

35:02

I know the style of the show. Each show has a rhythm and a cadence. I watch the show to capture the rhythm. Whoever they hire as a director for the episode has to capture the rhythm. So I focus on the rhythm and pulse of a show. Once you capture that, the director is immaterial.

36:11

Auditioning is my job. The play, the show, the film, that's just fun. I approach my job seriously. If I get auditions, I operate it like work. When you're on set it's so much fun b/c you're getting paid to learn. In this business you never stop learning. You can learn from anyone as long as you stay open.

37:52

Know the scene well, be off book for plays. TV is about the rhythm. Bc they have to condense the show to fit in the time frame. When you audition, you want to show that you can handle the pace of the words and get it all out. Film is more about reaction. Not so much about what you say, but what you do. Showing the reaction on your face and thought process.

39:24

One thing I do all the time is take a camera and tripod, and sit it beside me during the day. It doesn't have to be on. I put it there to desensitize myself to having something unnatural being in my face. I start to get used to it being there so I can be my natural self on camera.

41:00

The muscle memory of knowing what to do no matter who is in your face. You are so used to being in that space in front of a camera so you can relax no matter what is happening in the room. This business is being natural in unnatural circumstances. It's about learning to be natural in unnatural circumstances.

43:07

You have to be ready for whatever comes your way. I love theatre and the immediacy, spontaneity. It's different every single night. You are beholden to other people in tv and film.

45:27

You want to ramp up your performance, build it up so that you when you get to the audition, that's your best performance. Start by reading the scene a couple of times; read it before bed; don't have long sessions, but little sessions where you are slowly layering the material into your body.

Don't go for your best performance until you are in the room. Ramp yourself up so your best performance is when you are in front of the casting director with all the marbles on the table. That comes from slowly building and getting it to the place you know it's ready and then letting it explode in the space.

Get up a few hours earlier, and spend the morning focusing on the scene and lead yourself up to the moment of the audition by slowly working yourself up until you are in the room. Break it into segments

Look at it for a while and put it away, don't grind on 2 hour sessions. That's part of anxiety. It's about pacing yourself and slowly building so you can get it by doing your best when it's most needed.

50:07

Everyone should have a place/mentor/teacher where everything comes together.

51:43

"Keep adding the music to your body." Life experiences, different things, keep adding the music to your body b/c these are the things you are going to pull from when you act.

53:47

You have to be your best self in the moment. Do what you gotta do so you are your best self, have the best energy and light and being in your performance